



Nicolas & Marie's Pizza, Pasta and Donair located in Vernon BC is not your average pizza joint.

These delicious creations start with handmade dough, topped with sauces made from scratch and the most delectable and unpredictable toppings around. As 59-year-old owner and pizza maker extraordinaire Nicolas Kynigos claims, "I invented the gourmet pizza."

The mom and pop shop located at #4 2901 27th Street in Vernon is a piece of pizza heaven. The small space serves take-out pizzas, pastas, donairs and fresh salads all made with the freshest ingredients by Nicolas himself. And as an experienced restaurateur, his customers and clientele know Nicolas only serves the best.

Nicolas' foray into the restaurant scene started after moving from Montreal to Western Canada in the late 1970's. He has worked in fine dining, neighbourhood pubs and even dabbled in variety of ethnic food establishments. But pizza is what he does best. "I started Star Pizza in 1987 (in Vernon), and wanted to come back to a simpler version of that concept," Nicolas explains.

NICOLAS AND MARIE KYNIGOS
Nicolas & Marie's Pizza, Pasta and Donair
VERNON

continued

After finding a suitable space, Nicolas and his wife Marie opened their newest restaurant – a simple take-out concept that serves anything but simple pizza – in March 2015.

Although the business had an excellent product, Nicolas and Marie were struggling to reach their clientele and increase sales. After Marie did some online research, she stumbled across a social networking campaign Community Futures' Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP) ran on Facebook. Nik made the phone call and was connected to Community Futures North Okanagan.

"I didn't have any experience working with Community Futures but EDP guided me in the right direction," says Nicolas. Nicolas worked with a local business mentor to attract new customers

through social media campaigns, radio spots and other innovative marketing concepts. In addition to supplying a marketing coach, Community Futures also gave Nicolas and Marie a business loan to help with outstanding debts and bills: "Financially, they lent us money to help pay our rent and other costs," Nicolas explains.

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To ensure Nicolas stays on track, the financial help comes in installments as the endeavour moves forward, "We are getting busy – which has been great," says Nicolas. The growth has come in the form of increased foot traffic, catered corporate

events and take-out orders. "Vernon definitely likes our pizza," says Nicolas.

Now that Nicolas and Marie's Pizza, Pasta and Donair is on the map for Vernon residents, the hardest part is choosing what type of pizza to order. Luckily Nicolas has some recommendations, "My favourite is the Chinese Dragon with my homemade plum sauce – it tastes like a Chinese egg roll. But if you're looking for something a little more traditional, the Rancho is the best seller." Yum!

To get your own slice of pizza heaven, visit Nicolas and Marie's website at: www.nicolasandmariespizza.ca

To learn more about Community Futures North Okanagan, visit: www.futuresbc.com

Success is made, not found.

Since 1997, entrepreneurs with disabilities have started and grown successful businesses with EDP loans and our support.

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